

Lithuania. A Totalitarian State, Member of the European Union

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Some time ago I thought my experience with the totalitarian regimes would only come through school textbooks and university courses. However, such an assumption has been proved wrong.

Liberal democracies of the west are quite often praised for the freedoms they give to their citizens, whether on an individual basis or as members of various organizations. The European Union itself is probably considered by many to be the unconditional defender of human rights and freedoms across the globe. One only has to look at the fervour of the EU in supporting the development of “democracy” in Belarus, as has the recent presidential election in this eastern European country shown. And what about the constant appeals to Russia over the situation of human rights over there? It seems obvious that the body of the European Union tries to portray itself as being very strict over what is considered to be the values of democracy, for example such as the freedom of thought and speech. But is it really so?

Lithuania today is a full member of the EU and therefore at least superficially it also belongs to the European family. And the government of this country with equal enthusiasm to that of Brussels likes to spread the word about Lithuania as a truly democratic state where human rights and freedoms are flourishing. Yet, the last couple of weeks have simply proven it all to be a sham. What one needs is to have the courage to proclaim – despite the fact that we are dealing with a 21st century European country and a member of what is considered to be the progressive European Union – is the basic fact that Lithuania has remained a totalitarian state ever since the early part of last century. The following cases will support such statement.

Let’s consider the very basic idea of the freedom of thought and speech. Philosophers like Slavoj Zizek and professors such as David Harvey are arguably among the most prominent and the most respected persons not just among the academia, but among many members of various societies around the globe as well. To quote Stephen Sackur from the BBC Hardtalk, they “represent the very best of liberalism”. And yet, if any of them came to Lithuania and gave a speech or a lecture on what should Communism look like today or why we need socialism today more than ever, they would very likely break some kind of a law and be prosecuted. It seems that we are left here with a conclusion that those in power in Lithuania have a different definition of what the “freedom of thought” and the “freedom of speech” are.

Moreover, the totalitarianism of this Baltic state does not end here. If one wants to get the true feeling of what it is like to live under a totalitarian regime, this is what everyone should

pay attention to. It appears that in Lithuania you are not allowed to question and doubt over the official version of certain historical events. For instance, the case of the 13th of January, 1991 in Lithuanian history will do the job. This date is officially considered to be the day of national pride since that was the day when Lithuanians were prepared to die for the independence of their country. And some of them, unfortunately, did. In fact, nobody questions the number of the victims or the very fact that, indeed, there were victims. Nobody even questions the aggression of the Soviet troops as well. However, one person now faces a trial and even a two-year sentence for questioning the official version of the events of the 13th of January, 1991, and for his belief – which he expressed publicly – that there were some individuals among those leading the striving for independence who wanted Lithuanian victims in order to get sympathy internationally. In other words, his claim was that there were Lithuanian agents-provocateurs who had orders to also aim at their natives. And more importantly, he has even referenced some evidence that seem to make a strong case for his arguments over that controversial event.

The name of the person that is currently facing a trial due to his beliefs is Algirdas Paleckis. He is also the chairman of the only anti-capitalist and therefore anti-system political party in Lithuania. And because of this link, it is not only the chairman who is now facing prosecution, but the whole political party is under investigation as well. One naturally raises the question whether this could actually be happening in a so-called “liberal democratic” state. And all of this is based on the charges of the denial of the Soviet aggression and of the debasement of the victims of the 13th of January, 1991, none of which is actually true. These charges arrive from a clearly deliberate misinterpretation of the statements made by Algirdas Paleckis. If it turns out that he is right it will in no way diminish the dignity of those Lithuanians as well as the victims who were there to protect their homeland. And this also would not act as a denial of the Soviet tanks in Vilnius on that day. However, that would strongly compromise those in power, who used the opportunity back then and turned the independent country into a state controlled by a system of oligarchy which today seems to be properly totalitarian. Is it a mere coincidence that all of these cases are being dealt with such urgency? The speed of all of these investigations is extremely surprising, since many of other clearly more important cases of corruption or smuggling seem to be going nowhere. Why all of this huge fuss? And why this case seems to have been given the priority over all other cases in Lithuania at this moment, including even the one concerning the illegal CIA prison in the country and the alleged Palestinian prisoner held there? Two possible answers stand out. Firstly, the version of what happened back then on the 13th of January in 1991 offered by Algirdas Paleckis could turn out to be truth, which in turn would break the nationalistic myth that is the foundation of the politics in Lithuania that is today presented to the public. Secondly, if after all such historical version turns out to be false, the system that controls the state believes to have the opportunity to use the manipulative repressive laws – which actually deny the freedom of thought – to crush the only left-wing opposition to the right-wing monopoly controlling the economy and the population. That is where and how the totalitarian practice in Lithuania expresses itself today.

The European Union does not need to look at Russia or China in attempt to find violations of human rights or lack of democracy and consequently have the opportunity to confirm its status as the defender of the democratic values. Clear examples of totalitarianism are easily found within. Not to mention the couple of occasions when Lithuanian protesters against NATO summits were not allowed into Estonia due to their political views, the contemporary situation in Lithuania stands for empirical evidence of totalitarian tendencies in the 21st century Europe. Apart of this farce trial, the corporate media is blatantly spreading

propaganda of Russian agents financing the imaginary “unfriendly forces” – among which Algirdas Paleckis and his Socialist Party are also included – within Lithuania that supposedly are preparing the way for Russian occupation. This is the typical strategy of the proto-fascist right-wing governments and their corporate propaganda apparatuses not just in Lithuania, but in other Baltic states as well. To be anti-capitalist and socialist simply means to be pro-Russian. That is the absurd situation in these EU member states. As in the case of Algirdas Paleckis, being against the corporate government of Lithuania means not just being portrayed by the so-called “independent” media as a traitor of the nation, but it also means being persecuted for your beliefs and thoughts. Every political statement ever made will likely result in a pretrial investigation. In other words, the dictatorship of capital that controls Lithuania is now attempting to crush its opponents with the help of the judicial system in a pure totalitarian way. The next few months will be the litmus test for the situation of democracy and human rights in this Lithuania. Watch this space.

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